DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 380 189 PS 022 965

TITLE	Middle Grades Education in an Era of Reform. Proceedings of a Seminar Series: Spring 1993.
INSTITUTION	Academy for Educational Development, Inc., Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	93
NOTE	51p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Academy for Educational Development, 1255 23rd Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037 ($5).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Failure; Cooperative Planning; *Cooperative Programs; Disadvantaged Youth; *Educational Change; Educational History; *Educational Improvement; Intermediate Grades; Junior High Schools; *Middle Schools; *Professional Associations
IDENTIFIERS	Indiana (South Bend); Jackson Municipal Separate School District MS; *Middle School Students; Mississippi (Jackson); New Mexico; South Bend Community Schools IN

ABSTRACT

Many sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students in this nation are intelligent and talented, but are nevertheless performing at unacceptably low levels. Many middle-school initiatives do not address the need for comprehensive change in the policy and practices of district and state educational systems, nor do they address the content, quality, and assessment of academic programs, student achievement, and instructional approaches. The Academy for Educational Development (AED) and the Program for Disadvantaged Youth (Edna McConnell Clark Foundation) developed and conducted a series of seminars on systemic middle-grades reform. The goal of the seminars was to increase awareness among national education associations of the need for systemic middle-grades reform. These proceedings of the seminars contain: (1) introductory remarks by M. Hayes Mizell, director of the Program for Disadvantaged Youth; (2) a keynote address on the history of middle-grades schooling, by Joan Lipsitz; (3) three presentations by practitioners describing middle-grades reform work in their school districts and states; and (4) a summary of the small group discussions that took place at these seminars. The appendix contains a list of all participants and a description of AED's middle-grades work. (SW)

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MIDDLE GRADES EDUCATION IN AN ERA OF REFORM

Proceedings of a Seminar Series: Spring 1993

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MIDDLE GRADES EDUCATION IN AN ERA OF REFORM

Proceedings of a Seminar Series: Spring 1993

ACADEMY FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, INC.

ACADEMY FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AED is an independent, tax-exempt, nonprofit organization committed to addressing human development needs through education, communication, and information. Under contracts and grants, it operates programs for government and international agencies, educational institutions, foundations, and corporations. Since its founding in 1961, AED has conducted projects throughout the United States and in more than 100 countries in the developing world. In partnership with its clients, AED strives to increase access to learning, to improve the functioning of educational institutions, and to expand the sphere of education to social and economic development.

The School and Community Services department has a strong commitment to excellence and equity in education and to developing links between schools and community agencies to increase educational and development opportunities for at-risk youth across the United States. We work with urban school systems, community organizations, foundations and other funding agencies on programs addressing critical educational issues, such as school reform, adolescent pregnancy and parenting, literacy, youth development, school-to-work transition, and health. We provide technical assistance, conduct evaluate and disseminate information about effective policies and practices.

Headquarters
Academy for Educational Development, Inc.
1255 Twenty-Third Street., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037
Telephone: (202) 862-1900 Fax: (202)862-1947

New York Office
Academy for Educational Development, Inc.
100 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10011
Telephone: (212) 243-1110 Fax: (212) 627-0407

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Academy for Educational Development (AED), through its School and Community Services department, organized and conducted the series of seminars on middle-grades educational reform in the spring of 1993, the proceedings of which are summarized in this report. AED's interest in and support of middle-grades reform and the achievement of disadvantaged students in middle-grade schools stems from a variety of programs and evaluations it has conducted over the last ten years These activities, undertaken in partnership with schools, districts, foundations, and corporations have addressed a broad spectrum of challenges confronting middle-grades schools and students, including science and mathematics education for minority students and girls, adolescent pregnancy prevention and parenting, school restructuring, curriculum and instruction, professional development for middle-grades teachers and administrators, and school system reform. (This work is described in more detail in the appendix.)

The idea for the seminars grew out of conversations between AED staff and M. Hayes Mizell, director of the Program for Disadvantaged Youth of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, which funded the series. The recent experiences of the foundation's programs in middle-grades reform and of AED's work in the Urban Middle Grades Partnership (funded by the foundation and administered with the Southern Regional Council) indicated the need to support a growing infrastructure of organizations that could assist schools and districts not only in changing the structure of middle-grades schools but also in ensuring that new structures would result in the high achievement of students who have not been successful in school.

AED consultant Madeleine Holzer worked with me to design and conduct the seminars, coordinated the series, and compiled these proceedings. Dr. Holzer also designed and conducted the preliminary interviews with representatives of national organizations, which suggested the topics for the seminars. We were assisted by Rafael Valdivieso, AED's vice president for School and Community Services who hosted the seminars with us. Dorothy Nixon and Donita Drummond provided administrative assistance throughout the project.

The participants of the seminars were especially helpful to us in identifying the topics that were most pressing and suggesting many useful next steps for educational reform. They and their respective organizations are listed in the appendix. Our special thanks go to those who prepared presentations at the seminar—Joan Lipsitz, Mary Pat Hatcher-Disler, Richard LaPan, and Reuben Dilworth.

AED's Elayne Archer edited these proceedings and guided the report through all phases of production and dissemination, with the assistance of Pamella Terry, who produced the document. Mark Pinksy of Page Mark Communications designed this report; and Omni Press of Madison, Wisconsin published it.

Patrick Montesano
Executive Director, School and Community Services
Academy for Educational Development

INTRODUCTION

Background

In spring 1993, the Academy for Educational Development (AED), with the Program for Disadvantaged Youth of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, developed and conducted a series of seminars on systemic middle-grades reform, *Middle Grades Education In An Era Of Reform*. Senior officials of national associations involved with the middle grades and representatives of foundations and technical support organizations involved in middle-grades reform attended the seminars. Participating organizations included the Academy for Educational Development; the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; Carnegie Corporation of New York; the Center for Early Adolescence; the Council of Chief State School Officers; DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund; Edna McConnell Clark Foundation; Johns Hopkins University—Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning; Lilly Endowment, Inc.; the National Alliance of Black School Educators; the National Association of Elementary School Principals; the National Association of Secondary School Principals; National Council of Accreditation for Teacher Education; the National Middle School Association; the National Staff Development Council; and the Southern Regional Council. The seminars took place at AED's Washington, D.C. offices.

The goal of the seminars was to strengthen the emerging infrastructure of support for middle-grades educational reform by

- Increasing the awareness of the need for extensive, systemic reform in middle-grades education, beyond incremental school improvements;
- Providing a forum in which national associations could address this need;
- Determining ways of providing information, support, guidance, resources, and referrals to practitioners and policymakers seeking to undertake systemic reform of middle-grades education; and
- Promoting the coordination of efforts among the associations, themselves, and with other agencies and organizations involved in middle-grades reform.

Rationale: The Need for Systemic Middle-Grades Reform

The development of middle-grades education in the United States, rooted in research on developmental needs of young adolescents, has prompted a variety of initiatives throughout the country designed to help schools become more responsive to adolescents' needs for community, caring, and engagement in school. Many such initiatives, particularly those undertaken by schools or districts without extensive guidance, support, or technical assistance, have tended to promote organizational changes within schools (for example, dividing schools into "houses," forming teacher teams, creating advisory groups) or classroom management changes (for example, organizing cooperative learning groups). Educational associations have been supportive of such efforts through their publications, workshops, and annual and regional conferences. However, many middle-grades initiatives do not address the need for *comprehensive systemic change* in the policy and practices of district and state educational systems, nor

Many middle grades initiatives do not address the need for comprehensive systemic change in policy and practices of district and state educational systems.

These systemic changes must also be guided by an awareness and vision of the rich and varied educational experiences and support necessary not only for those students who usually perform well in school, but for those who have been least successful academically.

do they address the content, quality, and assessment of schools' academic programs, the academic achievement of all students, or the instructional approaches and support needed to ensure the achievement of students who have been least successful in school.

The need for comprehensive, systemic change is well documented in the literature on educational reform. Recent research provides compelling evidence that local innovation and incremental changes in a school must be supported by professional development, program and student assessment, scheduling that provides time for teachers to work together, and more—all of which are determined largely by the policies, practices, and funding of the school system. Without such supports and the systemic changes that must accompany them, school-based improvements are likely to have limited impact or be short-lived.

These systemic changes must also be guided by an awareness and vision of the rich and varied educational experiences and support necessary not only for those students who usually perform well in school, but for those who have been least successful academically. In urban classrooms, and more recently in classrooms in suburban and rural areas, there is an increase in the diversity of students—diversity represented by race and ethnicity, native language spoken, quality of previous school experience and level of success, socioeconomic background, and perceived levels of ability. Middle-grades education has often proven to be successful for a limited group of students. Lower achieving students—represented disproportionately by poor children and children of color—have not sufficiently benefitted from the caring environments of well-organized middle schools.

In their work with middle-grades practitioners across the country, many educational associations have been important sources of support and information about school organizational arrangements, teacher teaming, and developmentally appropriate curricula and counseling programs. Using this experience as a basis for further work, the three Clark Foundation/AED middle-grades reform seminars focused on exploring possible initiatives and collaborations among national education associations, foundations, and technical support organizations that could be undertaken as an integral part of systemic middle-grades reform.

Preliminary Interviews

In order to identify the appropriate national associations and officials to attend the seminars, determine the extent to which each association has addressed *systemic reform* in middle-grades education, and identify the policies and practices of the associations that could promote middle-grades reform, AED conducted a series of telephone interviews with selected national associations, foundations, and technical support organizations.

Through this process, we discovered that several organizations were already considering certain types of collaboration. For instance, the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) was beginning to assemble a group of national associations to discuss setting standards for staff development in the middle grades and was also conducting a mini-conference with the National Middle Schools Association (NMSA) on staff development. In addition, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) was beginning to talk with NMSA about co-spon-

soring some staff development programs. Many of the associations contacted had a substantial interest in the middle grades: NASSP had a Middle Grades Education division; the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) was exploring further ways to serve its middle-grades members; the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) was involved in setting standards for teacher certification in the middle grades; and NMSA, of course, had the middle grades as its raison d'etre. All the organizations contacted were enthusiastic about the possibility of coming together to discuss possible initiatives and collaborations in systemic middle-grades reform.

During these interviews, AED identified major issues in systemic middle-grades reform that were appropriate for possible seminar discussions. These included the following:

- The need for agreement in defining systemwide middle-grades reform;
- The articulation of middle-grades reform efforts with elementary and high schools;
- The piecemeal nature of most middle-grades reform efforts;
- The relationships among professionals in schools, how they plan, communicate and teach;
- Instructional methodology;
- Curriculum;
- The need to get teachers to pay more than just lip service to the middle-grades concept once they get back to the classroom; and
- The need to involve middle-grades reform efforts with the larger school restructuring movement.

AED planned the seminars with these issues in mind. The goal of the first seminar was to identify further the issues involved in systemic middle-grades reform; the second would ground those issues in the actual experience of practitioners; and the third seminar would engage the seminar participants in exploring possible initiatives and collaborations they could undertake.

These proceedings contain brief remarks by Hayes Mizell, director of the Program for Disadvantaged Youth, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation; a keynote address by Joan Lipsitz, program director, education, Lilly Endowment; three presentations by practitioners describing middle-grades reform work in their school districts and states; and a summary of various small group discussions that took place throughout the three seminars. The appendix contains a list of all participants and a description of AED's middle-grades work.

PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS: NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND MIDDLE SCHOOL REFORM

M. HAYES MIZELL

M. Hayes Mizell is the director of the Program for Disadvantaged Youth of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

I have been asked to say a few words about why the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation is supporting this series of meetings and what we hope will result from them. The reason for the foundation's interest is really quite straight forward. We believe many, many sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students in this nation are intelligent and talented but are nevertheless performing at unacceptably low levels. A large proportion of these students enter the sixth grade performing far below their abilities and by the end of the eighth grade they are no better off, and many are worse off.

The professionals who are educating these students are at a loss to explain why low achievement is so pervasive and persistent. In frustration, educators reduce their analysis to shorthand descriptors: "at-risk," "unmotivated," "single parent family," "stress," and "poverty." There is truth in each of these terms. That is why they are used so often and are so seductive. However, the personal, family, and community problems of low-achieving students do not absolve schools of the responsibility to educate them effectively. Too many schools are failing to do so.

There is ample anecdotal evidence and some research indicating that it is possible to educate all students in the middle grades effectively. There are many different approaches and some generic principles for doing so, but too few schools are applying them and the number that are increase too slowly. What is clear is that schools must change dramatically rather than incrementally. Whether you call this change "reform," "transformation," "restructuring," "renewal," or "reformulation," schools must alter their structure, operations, expectations, curricula, instruction, and use of time and resources to develop the intelligence and talents of all their students.

It is easy for me to make these observations, but we all know how difficult it is for schools to reform. Parents and other citizens believe reform is needed among schools in general, but they are less enthusiastic about reform of their local schools. School system bureaucracies package and sanitize reform so that it becomes a formalistic process without energy and effect. School administrators and teachers experience reform not as a stimulating and growth-producing experience, but as one more burden to be borne, usually alone and without support.

This brings me back to this series of meetings. If we agree that schools serving grades 6–8 must reform to enable all students, particularly those performing at low levels, to put their intelligence and talents to best use, what is the role of national organizations that have a specific interest in these schools and students?

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The leadership of your organizations is also needed to underscore the urgency of reform and forcefully communicate to the people with whom you work that reform to enhance student performance is necessary and legitimate.

While each organization represented here must answer this question for itself, the foundation hopes to learn from these meetings how your organizations view reform, what priority you give it, and whether and how you advocate and support it.

Beyond that, we hope to understand whether there is any agreement among your organizations about what reform is, its urgency, and how it can be achieved in the middle grades. It has been our observation that not all your organizations confront this issue directly, and when you do there is little communication or collaboration among you to advance and support meaningful reforms—that is, reforms intended to enhance student performance—in grades 6–8.

The Clark Foundation is supporting these meetings because it believes it is important for you to have a forum in which you can reflect on your respective organizations' roles in middle-grades reform and identify opportunities to lead and support it. The need is great, as are the opportunities. For example, by our count there are more than 80 organizations across the nation initiating projects to advance specific reforms in schools serving one or more of grades 6–8, and at least 30 of these are major initiatives.

Many of these initiatives are on the cutting edge of reform, and there is opportunity for your organizations to establish linkages with them and learn from their experiences. Some of these initiatives would be of interest to members of your organizations, and you may want to involve leaders of these efforts in your conferences and workshops. In other words, there are an increasing number of *new* faces and *new* ideas seeking to enhance student performance in the middle grades. We hope you will use them, and to help you identify who they are, by late June we will publish a directory* of these reform-oriented organizations and projects.

The leadership of your organizations is also needed to underscore the urgency of reform and forcefully communicate to the people with whom you work that reform to enhance student performance is necessary and legitimate. In schools, central offices, and state departments of education there are educators who know that reform is essential, but they work in environments where reform is neither expected nor encouraged. Your organizations can help create new professional norms that promote and support reforms to enhance student performance.

One way to create these norms is to give more attention to the connection between what schools do and what students achieve as a result of what schools do. The ways schools are organized, how they use their resources, and how they educate students are based on a variety of philosophies, mandates and notions of good or necessary practice. Organizations, vendors, researchers, and consultants devote much effort to promoting this or that philosophy, practice, or program. All of us do it. However, we devote little attention to whether or how these approaches result in improved student outcomes, particularly for the students most in need. If reform is to have any meaning for these students, we have an obligation to examine and reexamine whether the philosophies, practices, and programs we advocate make a difference in what students know and can do.

I know that many of your organiza-

* Information about ordering this directory is contained at the end of these proceedings.

tions are already doing some of the things I have mentioned, but there is ample room to do more, to address the issue of reform more directly. Certainly the need is there. We also hope you will use these meetings to explore the potential for new partnerships among your organizations when you find common ground. While each of us here approaches the subjects of middle-grades education and young adolescents from a different perspective, I hope we are in agreement that schools must reform themselves if all sixth, seventh, and eighth graders are to perform at the high levels at which they are capable.

Only teachers and administrators at the building level can bring reform to fruition, but to do so they need the leadership and support your organizations can provide. Day to day, some teachers and administrators demonstrate that by combining high expectations, challenging curricula, engaging teaching, and caring, they can enhance the performance of all students. In nearly every school there are these individual examples, but the institutional examples are rare. This is not likely to change until reform in the middle grades becomes an imperative that all teachers and administrators in a school embrace. If the national organizations most interested in and committed to young adolescents work together as advocates for reforms to enhance student performance, I believe schools for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders will change more quickly and more profoundly than would otherwise be the case.

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Informal Keynote Remarks

Joan Lipsitz

Joan Lipsitz is program director for elementary and secondary education at the Lilly Endowment Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana. Prior to joining the Endowment in 1986, she established and directed the Center for Early Adolescence at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill.

The introductory remarks reminded me that it was a long time ago that I taught, and I sometimes think about what it would take for me to be prepared to go back into the classroom now. It would take a great deal because the preparation that I had in the classroom, with the students that I had, is not adequate for what I would want to do now. Likewise, if I were asked now to start the Center for Early Adolescence, I wouldn't start it, I would start something different. So I do feel somewhat disconnected from where I've been to where I want to go in the next five years.

What we're talking about here is reform, reform of middle-grades schools, but I don't think that we agree about what we mean by reform. I think that we could spend much time talking very productively about whether we have a shared understanding of what we mean by reform and what it would take to get a shared understanding. To me reform means *reformulate*, and it means we need to reformulate what we're doing in schools based on a new covenant with children and their parents. This is why it would take a great deal for me to go back into the classroom now; I'm not quite clear about what that new covenant needs to be. We need to think about it together.

A Brief History: The Two Tracks

I've been asked to talk some about history. I think that the history of middle-grades schooling that makes most sense for us to capture is the attempt, then and now, to formulate the meaning of early adolescent experience. What is happening now in some ways parallels the history of junior high schools in America. If you go back to that history, it's as if you're reading two totally different histories, or interpretations, of what junior highs were. One of those interpretations has to do with something very technocratic. Speakers didn't talk about a dropout rate, they talked about a "leakage" rate. There was a leakage rate after eighth grade, a serious one, of students who leaked out of the system, never went to high school, and went immediately into the labor force.

One of the questions was, if students are not continuing, what can we do to prepare them better for the labor force? The transition-to-work issue hit at the eighth grade. One of the answers was to add the ninth grade, and to make junior high schools more vocational. You may hear some parallels here in what is happening now because this was a solution to a labor force problem. The corporations were saying, "People are coming to us unprepared for work," and turned to the schools. The solution was to add a grade and to become less classical and more job-

One impulse was towards hurrying the students up and getting them ready for the labor market, and the other impulse was towards slowing them down, and staying more "elementary."

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oriented. It also was an attempt to stop the leakage rate or to reduce it. There was such a discrepancy between the eighth grade, or the K-8 schools, and even when students did stay in the ninth grade, they then dropped out. They couldn't make the transition. So the articulation that we talk about now was then based on the attempt to create ninth grade as a transitional year that was more like high school and less like elementary school, so that students might not drop out, and we could reduce the leakage rate.

That's one historical track. The other track is much more developmental. It held that the reason that students are dropping out, the reason they can't make this transition, is that the schools are developmentally inappropriate. They're not elementary school students, and they're definitely not high school students, so what we need is a distinct organization for grades 7–9 that addresses the developmental needs of this age group. With that argument there was much more interest in affective education, a reduction of emphasis on cognitive skills, (as if a choice must be made between the two) and much more of what people started criticizing as being "touchy-feely," a kind of disjuncture between what happened in the junior high school and what happened in the senior high. And there was, therefore, much more emphasis on the junior high as being more like an elementary school in some ways.

One impulse, then, was towards hurrying the students up and getting them ready for the labor market, and the other impulse was towards slowing them down, and staying more "elementary." Some of this should sound very familiar to you because it's exactly the dilemma of identity that middle schools have when school boards decide that they want to switch to the middle school model. Some of the people in the community understand this as meaning that the students are acknowledged as being more adult. They need something more "secondary" in the curriculum than the elementary school is going to afford. And other people understand it as something that would be more "elementary" and would allow young adolescents to have a childhood longer.

This becomes a serious identity problem for middle schools. And it seems as if both in the junior high movement and later in the middle school movement, the schools have been strongest, meaning politically most defined, when the developmental impulse has driven the technological impulse—but when both are acknowledged. It's when they are not both acknowledged that people tend not to know what the schools are about.

I think we see something quite similar when you look at the open school movement in the 1960s when people started going to England and looking at the British Infant Schools and saying, "That's what we really want (the British Infant Schools are really elementary schools) for our young adolescents. That was at the height, I think, of the careful articulation of what middle schools needed to be. I think now many are awash in identity crisis, not necessarily that they know they're in crisis, but I think they're lost in identity crisis. It's very difficult for schools in the middle to answer questions about what they stand for and what their distinctive purpose is. And they have, as a result, been buffeted by a variety of economic and political policy decisions.

If you need to rebalance district lines for the purposes of school desegregation, you will most likely move students at the middle or junior high around, up, or

down to do that. If you need more space or less space in the senior high school, you will most likely move the students in the middle around.

Because the middle schools have not been able, or been unsuccessful, in saying, "This is what we stand for; this is who we are," they are politically weak in the continuum. This is a real failure on the part of the adults who are supposed to be helping young adolescents to understand the answer to the question, "Who am I?" The answer is always, "You are transitional." And what is the identity of this school? It is a transitional school; it redresses the wrongs that happened before, or the rights that didn't happen, and it prepares you for what is about to come. This is not a very strong thing to live or die for if you are a young adolescent or a teacher of young adolescents. I think we can look at the history of the junior high and predict that the middle school will also be politically weak, if we don't figure out some of the answers to the identity crisis of the schools themselves. That is my very short historical overview, a highly expurgated edition.

Where Are We Now?

I was also asked to deal with the question of where we are now. I think that we are in a time of major awareness about young adolescents and some of the institutions that serve them. We're probably in a time of high rhetoric, more than the Clark Foundation's "three highs" [high expectations, high content and high supports]. I think that more people now who work with young adolescents have a better understanding of who they are and therefore don't feel as emotionally assaulted by the young adolescents as they used to. I think they understand more about the universal physical mileposts in being young adolescents, although I still see shocked looks on faces when I mention menstruation in middle schools (but that may be regional). And I think that there is more understanding of what is not universal in early adolescence, which is everything except the physical. There's more understanding of the fact that we create early adolescence as a social phenomenon and that the institutions that the students attend help to create the phenomenon of early adolescence. I think there is more understanding about that.

I think that there's more understanding of, or more attention to, climate issues in middle schools. My experience in the middle schools that I go into now is that they are relatively peaceable kingdoms. They're relatively friendly and warm. And adults appear to be more respectful of the young adolescents as individuals but not necessarily of them in groups. I see more one-on-one relaxed conversations between adults and students with parents on a personal level than I used to see. And I see more emphasis on the relationships among adults in the schools, more professional support of them, less complaining about students in the teachers' lounge (which used to be the only thing I heard about students in these schools), less randomness of attachment between adults and students, more focused attachment of sets of adults with sets of students.

What I mean by this is that I think that the greater awareness about who the students are has led to some climate changes concerning how the students and adults work with one another, and has led to some structural changes in the schools—the schedule, teaming, houses, and so forth—in an attempt to control the randomness of association. Schools have not

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What still is barely happening is that after looking at whom, where and how we teach, what we teach remains a serious issue.

been quite as successful in their attempts to control the randomness of the curriculum. But they have in the randomness of association, and I think that has changed adult relationships with one another. When adults are asked to work together with a less random grouping of students, their concern about the students and their responsibility to one another is heightened. So there is a difference in the greater awareness about whom it is that we teach and the environment in which we teach. That leads to *how* it is we teach.

I see some differences in instructional methodology now. I think there is greater understanding of the fact that this is a bread-and-circus crowd of students and that the lecture method from the podium, the test on Friday, and the ditto sheets don't quite capture their imagination. I do see some diversification of the instructional methodology happening in the classrooms in the schools that I'm visiting. In fact, sometimes I see an explosion of creativity in instructional methodology, which is very thrilling, and which I think is very difficult for teachers.

I'm going to go on to something very critical, so I want to emphasize that this creativity is a real triumph. When I first started studying middle schools, I shadowed students in the school that I studied, and it was the most boring thing I ever did in my life. In one school the principal said to me, "I really admire you. You have just done what I have never been able to do. You have made it through the day." And he went on to praise the students in the school for being generous enough to make it through day after day after day, this way.

Now, that certainly can still happen, but I find it increasingly less painful to make it through the day in a school. I think that's important. And I can tell you that in one of the sites that I've been looking at somewhat closely, the senior high school now has a very serious problem. It doesn't have room for all the students because the "leakage" rate isn't working. Too many students are showing up for high school. That's a wonderful outcome. If you're going to look at what your outcome measures are of school performance at the middle level, to have the senior high school get too crowded just because of attendance is really a wonderful outcome.

So something is happening in some of these schools that is binding the students more to the school, engaging the students more in the life of the school. And there is enough going on of interest in the school that the attendance rates are going up, thanks to the students and the teachers. That's very important. There is greater engagement in the school.

What We Teach: The Remaining Challenge

What still is barely happening is that after looking at *whom*, *where* and *how* we teach, *what* we teach remains a serious issue. Interestingly, I think that some of the things that hold the students in school is that the work has changed outside of the four sacrosanct curricular areas of language arts, social studies, math, and science. There is a lot of exciting stuff that goes on in what's called the "exploratory"—or whatever it's called—that helps bind students to schools. This is not to say that exciting things aren't happening in some curricular areas in some schools. But it is to say that it has not yet become "how we do things here" to ask *why* about the curriculum; whereas it has become part of the "how we do things here" to ask *why*

about instructional methodology, discipline, the randomness of association, and so forth.

On some days I'm optimistic that the schools that have made it this far will get the courage to ask the *why* about the *what*. On other days I'm not optimistic, because I think the forces against asking are fairly strong. I like to think that between NCATE and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, we've got the levers to press issues of the *what*.

The New Ecology of Growing Up

The greatest failure to change, though, gets me back to what I used as the segue from the introduction to this talk. It has to do with what it would take, now, after all these years of my not having been in the classroom, to go back to teaching with a sense that I really knew what I was doing and that I was doing the right thing. This failure to change relates to the new ecology of growing up in America. I am not seeing signs of middle schools agonizing over the relationship between what they're doing and the way students are growing up in their homes and communities. To use a kind of shorthand about this, I think that there is too much psychology and too little sociology. There has been too much emphasis on what early adolescent development is, in a vacuum, and too little emphasis on the relationship between the home, the community, the economic lives of young adolescents, and the role of the school.

This is why I said that if I were going to start the Center for Early Adolescence again, I wouldn't start it the way I started it in 1978. I don't think we paid enough attention to the new ecology of growing up in America. And I think it's a difficult problem. It's not a problem only for the middle schools. But I think that middle schools right now are a more highly evolved species than elementary, and definitely, than high schools. So I think that if middle schools struggled with this issue more affirmatively and strategically, they would call the question for elementary and high schools. They would take their role as being pivotal, rather than transitional, very seriously.

If you talk to people who are looking at what it means to reconceptualize youth services in America, they are, for the most part, leaving the schools out of that conversation. It's really quite amazing to think that people talking about reconceptualizing youth services could even imagine leaving the schools out. Yet it's really quite easy to do because schools have made themselves somewhat irrelevant to the conversation. As long as that continues, people who are working on reconceptualizing youth services will fail. But I don't see the middle schools, for instance, banging at the doors of these conversations, and saying, "How can you not let us into this conversation?" It's a strange omission on everyone's part.

Where Do We Go From Here?

I think we have to press for a lot of attention to the *what*, to the heart of what's going on in schools—the teaching and learning exchange among adults, between adults and students, and among students. It's funny because many of us fought to expand the definition of curriculum from something very narrow to "everything that happens to a kid in the course of a day." I think we have to pay some attention to what it was that we used to call curriculum.

I am not seeing signs of middle schools agonizing over the relationship between what they're doing and the way students are growing up in their homes and communities. To use a kind of shorthand about this, I think that there is too much psychology, and too little sociology. There has been too much emphasis on what early adolescent development is, in a vacuum, and too little emphasis on the relationship between the home, the community, the economic lives of young adolescents and the role of the school.

I've heard very little conversation about poverty. In fact I rarely hear the word mentioned. And I don't hear very much discussion about ethnicity and the relationship between being part of an ethnic or racial group and being an individual growing up in American democracy. I just don't think that this, which is probably the most tortured dilemma that we're experiencing right now, is being grappled with very much in the schools I visit.

We also have to pay attention to what it means to restructure for diversity. There is a bitter conflict going on, some of it not terribly civil, about what it means to be a diverse society when you get into the school building. I don't see the people leading middle school change at the table during those bitter discussions. If we're going to make American diversity work in this country, which is an *if*, then it seems to me that those people who are most seriously grappling with what schooling is for young adolescents need to be grappling with what schooling is in our democracy in the 1990s. There is deep disagreement about what schooling is in a democracy, something which John Dewey attempted to determine. We need a new John Dewey. I don't see one on the horizon, someone who really articulates the meaning of what we conceptualize as a middle-grades school for a diverse, increasingly discordant, society.

I'm really talking about two different things when I talk about the new ecology. One has to do with what it means for an individual young adolescent to grow up. The other has to do with how we grow up in groups in this society. I don't hear people in middle-grades reform grappling enough with either of those. I've heard very little conversation about poverty. In fact I rarely hear the word mentioned. And I don't hear very much discussion about ethnicity and the relationship between being part of an ethnic or racial group and being an individual growing up in American democracy. I just don't think that this, which is probably the most tortured dilemma that we're experiencing right now, is being grappled with very much in the schools I visit.

A Coherent Vision

The last thing I want to say is that what I think we need to grapple with is not necessarily about middle grades, but this is the perfect place to put it out on the table: I would like to see greater coherence in the standards that we hold for teaching and learning, which, of course, would have to start with coherence of vision about what middle-grades education is about. I would like preservice professional development to be driven by standards resulting from that coherent vision. I would like to see that vision driving licensure at the state level and what it means to be board certified. I would like what it means to be board certified to drive what staff development for the first three to five years of the teacher's initiation into the profession is all about. And I would like a coherence between professional development and what we expect students to accomplish as a result of being in our schools for 180 days, or however many it is.

My fear is that there will be an inadequate vision driving all of this, in which case people will get stifled by it. My hope is that there would be enough of an enlarging vision that middle schools would finally be able to articulate what they stand for. And I honestly believe that we have a much better chance of achieving that coherence at the middle level than we do at the high school level, right now. So I'm very ambitious, because of the pivotal nature of the middle grades, about what people at the middle level could not only articulate for 6–8, but be exemplars of for K–12. They could say, "Come see how we do it," and "We could give you pointers for how you might do it." But I don't see schools in the middle having the sense of self-confidence yet to call these questions. I don't see people at the middle level, in the school districts that I look at, having the political savvy or clout to put these questions down on the table, and say, "Let

us reason with one another."

Finally, I am very optimistic and thrilled by things I see in individual schools. I think there is remarkable heroism going on among principals and teachers in many schools at the middle level. But I worry that it takes heroism to rear the next generation of children. I believe very strongly that unless more ordinary people can get this job done, our children can't fare very well. I have managed not to say "systemic change" today because I think you get brain dead when you say it. I prefer talking about making what now takes heroism part of the "dailiness" of what we do in school. How do you make that happen? I think, ironically, it is going to take heroism to put these very difficult questions about the new ecology on the table, and it's going to take pulling back from individual schools, and calling these questions for groups of schools at the district level, at the state level, and at the national level. I really want to emphasize the level of excitement I feel when I go into some individual schools, and I also want to emphasize the short-lived excitement I feel at district levels, and the political fragility of district- and statewide reform. Therefore the ongoing, incessant need for heroism.

PANEL DISCUSSION: VIEWS FROM THE FIELD

AED chose three speakers for the panel discussion, to describe reform efforts in their districts and states, the strengths of those efforts and the unresolved issues, the kinds of support provided by outside organizations, and the possible role that national organizations might play in assisting their work. The speakers were Mary Pat Hatcher-Disler director of the South Bend Indiana School Corporation, Richard LaPan, director of the New Mexico State Education Department's Middle Grades School State Policy Initiative, and Reuben Dilworth, formerly assistant superintendent for middle schools of the Jackson, Mississippi Public Schools.

MARY PAT HATCHER-DISLER

Mary Pat Hatcher-Disler is director of the Middle Grades Improvement Program and curriculum supervisor in the South Bend, Indiana School Corporation. She was formerly a middle school reading teacher. She was a member of the Indiana and Carnegie Middle Level Task Forces and is currently a member of the Indiana Middle Grades Improvement Network Steering Committee.

South Bend Middle School Reform hasn't been a beautiful picture with an artist's brush strokes of aesthetic perfection, the way those books and journal articles that you all publish say it should be. In fact, it hasn't been an artist's picture at all. It's been more like that Langston Hughes poem, "Mother To Son" and that is, "Life . . . ain't been no crystal stair." But I'll tell you, once we got started, we didn't turn back.

The Community

South Bend has a population of 105,000 and is located three miles from the Michigan state line and about 90 miles east of Chicago. It has a declining population since the late sixties because of the absence of the Studebaker manufacturing facility and all the support industry that accompanied it. In fact, our population, from 1970–80, declined by about 15 percent and then from 1980–90 it declined another 5 percent. So what was once an industrial area now is very much a service center; industry has pretty much left South Bend, Indiana.

According to the 1990 statistics for our community, 15 percent of our population is below poverty level. We have a median household income of $24,000 and a family income of $29,000. Sixty-four percent of adults over 16 are employed. While that looks dismal, some of the unemployed are disabled and some are students. South Bend is the home of University of Notre Dame, St. Mary's College, Indiana University at South Bend and numerous, small, church-related schools. So we do have higher education, and we're not all farm land as you may think.

Our school district itself has about 22,000 students and 1200 teachers. Our city is divided into five feeder districts. They're pie-shaped with every district having a portion of the inner city. In each of these districts, there's one high school and one middle school. Each middle school, then, is fed by four to six elemen-

tary schools. We have 24 elementaries, five middle, and five high schools. We have two centralized kindergartens. We also have adult education programs, ESL programs, stay-in programs for student mothers, Step-Ahead for preschool at risk, special education Chapter One and a variety of others. But I know you're most interested in our middle schools.

I came to South Bend as an elementary teacher to find that in 1976, there were four middle schools (and they were called *middle* schools). One of the high schools had closed, another high school had been changed to a middle school, and two new buildings were being opened as middle schools. But ladies and gentlemen, they didn't know anything about middle schools. They had those names, and we still had some K–8 programs, but virtually they were junior high schools with grades 7–9.

The school where I was teaching did have some cross-curricular connections at the ninth and the seventh grade levels, although I wasn't a part of that because I was teaching remedial reading. In 1981, there was a reorganization called for in our school district with desegregation, and at that same time, the ninth grade was moved to the high school, leaving seventh and eighth grade at the middle school. An eight-period day was established with five basic skills, a tutorial, an enrichment program, and two related arts choices for the academic curriculum.

At that time, we had flexible block scheduling. Teachers taught five classes plus one personal planning, one team planning, and one tutorial program. The teams focused mainly on students' behaviors and grades. We had had no more than four hours preparation in what middle school was. But we had a new superintendent who was an advocate of middle schools, so we began to learn about it.

Six years later in 1987—we had gone on all that time not knowing what we were supposed to be doing with this wonderful, glorious structure—the Lilly Endowment offered us an opportunity to create a school within a school. I was fortunate to be one of the lead teachers in that school within a school. We focused on new teaching styles and learning styles of teachers and students, and devised our small group of a hundred students and four teachers as an experimental program for at-risk students. Virtually all the students we had were the passed-offs that no one wanted. They were teacher-recommended, but we interviewed them. We had three goals. We called it the PAE program—personalization, affiliation and high expectations for these children. I have to say that probably that year was the best year of my teaching experience because teaching was real to kids. Today those students still come back and stay in contact with us.

However, the program did not continue beyond two years. The district suffered a financial set-back, a three million dollar deficit, and of course, the first place to be cut was middle school. We went back strictly to a departmentalized program. We had some personal planning and team planning time, but nobody had a chance to see the same students, and we were very unfocused.

Middle Grades Improvement Program

About that same time though, as we were making those changes and working backward, the Middle Grades Improvement Program was initiated through the Lilly Endowment. Because of the poverty levels in our community, we were one of

the 16 sites chosen by the Lilly Endowment to present a program to them. We started by selecting a group of 25 teachers, five from each of our middle schools. The director thought that a cadre of teachers could be the teachers of teachers, and they could teach the next group, and so on, and we could spread our base that way. I was one of those members, and at the end of the first year, we were so delighted with all that we had been exposed to—things such as Madelaine Hunter, Bernice McCarthy's approach to cooperative learning, effective schools research, content-area reading, whole-brain learning and hemispheric dominance, adolescent growth and development, and higher-order thinking skills. None of us felt like specialists who could really go on and train teachers, but we felt that we were certainly leaders and wanted to be a part of this movement. They moved toward having a more in-depth program the second year, and a new group followed us. At the end of those two years, we had a cadre of 50 teachers. We were on our way!

Then there was a change of superintendents, as it goes in school districts. My predecessor moved on to be an assistant superintendent in a neighboring district, and the middle school program stood still for a period, while they argued about who should follow. It was I who was chosen in October, and, of course, the program was to continue. Only we were behind already by October. So we went on and decided to use those 50 people as the core who would be the leaders at the schools. We also decided to widen the breadth of the in-service staff development for people and give more teachers opportunities to participate. At the same time, we focused more on the individual schools.

I've compiled a pamphlet (see pp. 30-31) that will be helpful for you to see how we are as a district, and how we are as each of the five schools. We've been involved in interdisciplinary instruction, language arts/social studies integration, mathematics manipulatives, algebra for all. We've had a wide smattering of things that we've been involved in. Each of our five schools is at a very different place as you can see by the programs and the work that's going on, and the grants for which they've applied. I could be honest and say one of our middle schools truly looks today like a middle school. We are climbing out of that financial disaster that we were once in although there are threats that we're at that spot once more. However, I know today that we won't go back to departmentalization as we did in 1988 because we do have a wide base now of teachers and principals who are interested.

There are many challenges in all of this. The process of change is a problem for teachers. We're a veteran group of teachers in South Bend, probably the median age is around 46. People are very comfortable teaching the way they were taught. Our school board is very interested and very supportive of middle level education, but likewise, they are that way about every other program. They're not very focused, and while they say they have a strategic plan, it does not come out in reality. It's on paper and it's not about instruction. It's very global—to serve the community and it's what the community wants to hear. That's the real world in South Bend. They're well-meaning people, but they're limited by budget. They want to do it all, but their commitment is verbal.

Our principals are torn between management and instruction. They do not report to me, they report to a manager-

Our principals are torn between management and instruction.

We need you to be involved with us. We need for you to continue to give us the wonderful conferences that you do, but bring them closer to us, perhaps in the ways of regional meetings. Adopt us. Help us locate possible funders. Help us with the research that we need. We need you there to nurture us, to guide us, to lead us.

kind-of-person/director, and so there's that conflict between the emphasis on management and instruction. The principals seem to have a broad vision of what's supposed to happen, but when it comes down to the brass tacks of it, they don't really know how to make it happen. They've gone to all of these wonderful workshops that you've all presented to us and they're fantastic. We've enjoyed them. We've got a good view of what should be happening.

But our people are leaders in the trenches at the schools. They need someone right next to them to hold their hand, to help them through it, to pick them up and dust them off when they've made the mistakes and say "That's all right," and push them on to continue. They need to learn how to get their faculties to buy in. They need to know how to nurture their faculty to make the changes. They need to know how to present themselves. They've been to all kinds of wonderful workshops. They've been exposed to Lilly's continuing conferences. They've been participants in the Indiana Middle Level Education Association. They've attended, to my knowledge, at least four of the last five National Middle School Association conferences. Two teachers and five principals went to Los Angeles. Principals and their assistants and about 25 teachers went to Louisville because it was so close to us, and some added directors went with us to San Antonio. So they've been exposed to all of this.

We participated in many things, but we certainly need your help. We need you there to nurture us, to guide us, to lead us. We've reached out to several organizations to help us, and we've been very fortunate through the Middle Grades Improvement Program's state networking program. That has been very beneficial. Through the Lilly Endowment, the technical assistance we've received from them has been more of an education to me than any piece of paper that I hold. We reached out to Educational Development Center, and they're my mentors. I've called them and they know my school; they know my school corporation and what's been going on. They can help me. They know the personalities of the people who are there. The Center For Early Adolescence has helped us in the area of literacy. I was also a member of the council that developed "Betwixt and Between" as a result of a Carnegie Corporation grant. I think, down the road, the legislation and the material presented in "Betwixt and Between" will lead toward reform for the entire state of Indiana.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need you. We need you to be involved with us. We need for you to continue to give us the wonderful conferences that you do, but bring them closer to us, perhaps in the way of regional meetings. Adopt us. Help us locate possible funders. Help us with the research that we need. Help us with our school board, so that we can get them on track, get them away from that bureaucracy about which we've talked. It hasn't been easy climbing those crystal stairs. Please, get involved with us. We want to make a difference for our young people, before it's the end of public school education. We're really worried and concerned about that in our area, and I believe nationally as well. We want to make a difference. We hope you'll really reach out and help us to do that.

RICHARD LAPAN

Richard LaPan is a middle level education consultant for the New Mexico Department of Education and director of the state's Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative, sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation. He has worked in schools, treatment centers, colleges, social service agencies, child development centers, and correctional facilities as a teacher, counselor, and administrator. He is a founding member of the city of Santa Fe's Children and Youth Commission.

The Community

Let me tell you a little bit about New Mexico because who we are as a state has a great deal of influence on the shape and manner in which the State Department of Education and the project that I'm involved with have grown. And if, in fact, one may argue the case that environment shapes your reality, perhaps the brief description I give you about New Mexico will give you some indications as to why that may be the case.

In the last ten years, New Mexico's population has grown: 300,000 new people have moved into the state. The state now has a total population of 1.5 million people, most of whom live in three general urban areas, and one third of whom live in one county—Bernalillo County, where Albuquerque sits. The two other large population centers are Dona Ana County, where Las Cruces is the primary city and Santa Fe and Los Alamos counties where Santa Fe and Los Alamos and Los Alamos Labs exist. Forty-three percent of our population is Hispanic, and within that is imbedded, not only what is considered traditional Latino or Central or South American populations, but a very large percentage of those who consider themselves Spanish European. They are Spanish/Hispanic. So we have sub-groups within sub-groups within sub-groups. The northern region's Hispanic population is very different than the southern region's population. They speak different dialects of Spanish, and along the Rio Grande corridor, you find variations of these dialects. Approximately 43 percent of our population are Caucasian-Europeans and come primarily come from Texas, Oklahoma, California, New York, and Colorado. Less than 3 percent of the population is African-American, the majority of whom live either in Albuquerque or along the west Texas border. Less than one percent of the state's population is Asian-American and about 10–13 percent of our population is Native American. And again, within that population, there are Pueblo Indian and Plains Indian groups. Each Pueblo is an autonomous organization, and in a sense, also a sovereign country, in and of itself. So when you talk about systemic reform, you talk about how to make a model work from a state level, across all the various types of experiences that you can imagine in a very rural, physically large state.

Assessment of the Middle Grades

We start first by asking the question, which system is it that you want to reform? Which system do you want to restructure or reformulate? The social system? The economic system? The cultural relationship system? The linguistic system? The educational standard system? The state government system? If you ask that question, you could spend many years and spin a lot of wheels trying to resolve which of those questions you want to address first, let alone how you're going to answer that ques-

I think collaboration is only as effective as the communication, the ability to create constructive compromise, and the consistency with which the collaboration exists. . . . The kind of collaboration that we are seeking to establish in New Mexico is one that is on-going, consistent, and based on creative, constructive compromise.

tion. So having said that, I want to describe for you the process by which the work that I'm engaged in now has come to be.

In 1989, the State Board of Education impaneled the Middle Level Education Task Force to do an assessment of the status of middle level education in New Mexico. That task force spent a year doing research around the state and produced a document called *Moving Into Action*, which was later produced as part of the Carnegie grant. The task force made a presentation to the State Board of Education, and there were five general recommendations, one of which is the reason I'm sitting in front of you here today. One of those recommendations was to establish a middle-level consultant position in the State Department of Education.

This task force then became an ongoing advisory committee to the State Board of Education to provide input and information in support of the direction in which middle level education can move. At the same time, under a Republican administration, the governor of the state supported the interest in the first of the Carnegie grants. Now, I mention the Republican part because New Mexico is traditionally a Democratic state and Garrey Carruthers was the first Republican governor in 30 years. And again, talking about going across traditional boundaries, this initiative for educational reform was begun in what was, by our experience, a very atypical circumstance—a Republican administration seeking to support educational restructuring and reform, which has continued under a Democratic administration. The advisory committee is now the Carnegie Middle Level Education Advisory Committee.

Collaboration

I want to tell you why I believe collaboration is extremely important. I think collaboration is only as effective as the communication, the ability to create constructive compromise, and the consistency with which the collaboration exists. All of you have, in your own experience, numerous opportunities or past experiences where you called up somebody and said, "Well, let's talk about this and maybe we can put our resources together, and let's collaborate and do this and get something done." Or you react to the questions that you get from the school districts about research. Somebody calls you and says, "I need you to come and do a presentation," or "I need to gather some information about this particular issue," and you call up the people that you know and you collaborate around that specific request. That kind of collaboration is great in that it's successful and it's reactive to a specific task.

However, the kind of collaboration that we are seeking to establish in New Mexico is one that is ongoing, consistent, and based on creative, constructive compromise. Creative and constructive compromise means that it's more than just, "This is what I want, this is what you want. I'll give up a little, you give up a little, and what we end up with is something that neither one of us wants, but we agree to do it." That's what we've all been involved with in one way or another for many years. It's a hallmark of major institutions, whether they're state governments, foundations, or the federal government.

And so, I've heard today, the question of time, and as you know from literature about young adolescent development, and particularly about middle level concepts, time is *the* variable. And I would suggest to

you that time is not only *the* variable, but it's absolutely the essence. I would also suggest that all of our children are at risk, whether they are at the middle, elementary or secondary level, or whether they come from impoverished economic backgrounds or urban or rural areas. It is a disservice to any restructuring or reform movement to single out or separate individuals by categories, other than that of the young adolescent student.

All young adolescent students are unique in their individual personality characteristics, their physical development, and their emotional needs. And so their performances on academic standards are going to be also as unique and inconsistent, from a statistical stand point, as the characteristics of who they are. If we do not remember that, if we do not make that a focal point, in setting standards, so that those standards are realistic, attainable, and sustainable, we will not be on the right track. If the answers to those three questions suggest more questions, stop, and go back and readdress the source of those questions. That is the time factor that taking the time up front to assess the success of any restructuring movement is essential.

The Diagram

What you see floating around the three circles in the center of the diagram (see p. 32) is a laundry list, so I want to run through it quickly and then explain to you how we attempt to pull this together. Each of those circles, the Middle Level Education Advisory Committee, the Department of Education, and the University of New Mexico are involved in a wide variety of change initiatives, some funded by outside sources, others motivated by internal direction. For example, at the University of New Mexico, the College of Education has currently undergone restructuring. Within that they've created a Division of Innovative Programs. The Division of Innovation Programs is organized around interdisciplinary teams of professors focusing on five initiatives. These five initiatives are the middle level, early childhood, culture and literacy, policy, and diversity.

The middle level initiative is connected with the advisory committee and the *Turning Points* Initiative. I've worked it that way because I also want to emphasize that this notion of embedding initiatives within initiatives, needs to be just that, as opposed to a linear list or even, for that matter, a hierarchical list. So they're circles within circles within circles. If you can imagine broken lines—I'm waiting for the technology where I can put this into a computer and have it represented in a holographic representation because language fails me, and certainly two-dimensional diagrams are a failure in expressing the nature of that experience.

At the College of Education at the University of New Mexico, there are four specific initiatives that feed into our activities. Two are a Masters in Middle Level Education and an Educational Specialist Certificate in Middle Level Education, and an experimental preservice program for middle-grades teachers, a 32-week placement in three middle schools in the state. In addition, we are one of three national sites involved with the Center for Early Adolescence through funding by the DeWitt Wallace Readers' Digest Fund on strengthening teacher preparation for middle grades; and the fourth initiative is the implementation of comprehensive school health programs, also funded by a separate grant from DeWitt Wallace-

Reader's Digest and the American Association of Colleges of Teachers of Education.

In addition, outside the College of Education, but connected to it, we have a Bureau of Educational Planning and Development which is involved with Rockefeller curriculum development grants and the National Science Foundation Systemic Initiative for Science and Math Education. That's what's going on there. Also within the Carnegie Middle Level Education Advisory Committee, we have connections with the Office of the Governor. The state of New Mexico is a Re:learning state, and the State Department of Education is a Re:learning department. What that means is that we have adopted the nine common principles of Re:learning as part of the action plan for the manner in which we do business. Also, through the Office of the Governor, we have support for the NSF grant, service learning, healthier communities, support for the Carnegie Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative, and a Total Quality Management Initiative. We have also the Children, Youth, and Families Department. We have Human Services Division therein—Child Protective Services. We have a Risk Reduction Division, which has Drug Free Schools and Communities, Communities in the Schools and a Middle School At-Risk Program. All these are connected to the *Turning Points* Initiative. All that is within that little circle at the top of the diagram.

Under the Department of Health—we have the Health Promotion Bureau, the Adolescent Health Program, the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program, the Maternal Child Health Bureau. Also, the Department of Health has been selected by the governor as the lead agency in pursuing a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Planning Grant for a Healthier Community. At the State Department of Education, as I mentioned, we are a Re:learning department involved with the Coalition of Essential Schools. We have a Re:learning task force. We're involved in Charter Schools legislation. We, in the last two and a half years, have taken a very affirmative step away from being a regulatory, statute-driven agency, towards a technical assistance and support department. That is much easier to say than to do.

There's a great deal of struggle that occurs on a daily basis within the department about a) Should that really be our goal? b) If it is, how are we going to achieve it? and c) Who's going along for the ride versus who's going to contribute to it? So within that, we are beginning to form interdisciplinary work teams. We also have a Health Issues Work Group, an Early Childhood Inter-Agency Action Team, and an Employability Group. We are entering the third year of a pilot program moving away from a statute, regulatory-driven accreditation process to an outcomes assessment model—a self-study model. All of this is based on a document called the Standards for Excellence, which is an outcomes-based model concerned with student attributes and attitudes. We've changed our competencies into K–12 global outcomes by content area. And we are also involved in a Strengthening Quality Schools Initiative, which is an offshoot of Total Quality Management.

In addition to that, one of the more exciting activities of the *Turning Points* Initiative are interstate collaboratives with other Carnegie network states. Next week, someone else from the department and I are going to Colorado to meet with the Colorado Department of Education and

the folks there who are involved in similar projects. We're going to take a tour of the Mapleton school district which is the school district that they have chosen to work with in a systemic, districtwide intervention practice. We're beginning to gather information about where we want to place our primary emphasis: Is it the teacher? the administrator? the school site? the school district? In terms of the central office, is it the school board? the county? the state? When we decide where we are placing the emphasis, we are deciding the fulcrum upon which change that's constructive and sustainable tips. Where do you place your greatest emphasis? Part of our work was to complete almost two years of assessment within our state, doing polls and surveys and conducting regional forums to find out from teachers and administrators what they needed, what was going on, what works, what doesn't work.

Language is number one. People do not understand the language of national initiatives. What one foundation calls *systemic reform* another foundation calls *qualitative restructuring* and so on. Language—a common lexicon. In addition to the directory that you're talking about publishing, if you could also publish a glossary which all foundations agree to use, that would help tremendously.

The Problem of Leadership

We have identified that one of the primary issues, if not *the* primary issue, is leadership. Very often leadership seems to mean either someone who is particularly eloquent, articulate or charismatic getting up and saying, "This is the way things should be," and people are drawn to that and they say "Yes, we should do that because—I can't tell you why—it's just that it sounds so good when that person says it." Well, we all know the limitations of that type of leadership. The other type of leadership is, "Well I'm in charge; it's my responsibility, my you-know-what is on the line if it doesn't happen, and so I'm going to tell you what to do and if you don't do it, then that's your problem because it's no longer mine." We also know the limitations of that type of leadership.

What we are trying to establish inherent in our type of model is that the leadership comes from the focus on young adolescent students through the school environment, through the community in which they live, and out into all of the organizations that are in a relationship to those individuals and to those communities. Then the leadership needs to go back in the same way. So leadership is not top-down or bottom-up. Leadership is from the middle out. It's from the center—out and back. And it's a continuously recirculating process of interaction. Legislators asks me, when funding for programs and initiatives comes up each year, "When is this restructuring going to be done? When will you be through?" And sometimes people will say, "Well, 10 or 15 years" and they say, "You know, my children will be out of school. I won't care anymore." Or they'll say, "How am I going to afford to pay for that for 15 or 20 years?" So we have to get past that boundary also.

One of our goals is to establish, through the activities of all these various organizations and governmental agencies, a resource and technical assistance center, either statewide or regional, meaning the Southwest region. The activities of that resource and technical assistance center would be (1) staff development, and by

What we are trying to establish inherent in our type of model is that the leadership comes from the focus on the young adolescent student through the school environment, through the community in which they live, and out into all of the organizations that are in a relationship to those individuals and to those communities. Then the leadership needs to go back in the same way. So leadership is not top-down or bottom-up.

staff I mean all staff, from the janitor to the state superintendent to the governor—all staff; (2) research on middle level education, good educational practices, and young adolescent development; (3) curriculum and assessment development; and (4) resource management. How do program, curriculum, people and money all fit together without there having to be a battle?

How do you bring that together into one coherent piece?

The last element is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that is now before Congress. I, from a personal standpoint, will urge every one of you, in whatever form and through whatever means you have available and feel comfortable, to advocate for, not only the renaming of this act to be the Elementary-Middle Level and Secondary Act, but also to advocate for the reallocation of funds and the redistribution of criteria and authorizations contained within that bill, to reflect the fact that there are at least three distinct, if not more, levels of educational practice that are occurring in this country.

Reuben Dilworth

Reuben Dilworth is currently the superintendent of schools in Columbus, Mississippi. He was formerly the assistant superintendent for middle schools in Jackson, Mississippi for two years and the assistant superintendent for junior high schools for six years. In 1992, Jackson Public Schools received a grant from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation's Program for Disadvantaged Youth to develop a systemwide plan for middle-grades educational reform.

I'm pleased to share with you some information about the reform efforts at the middle school level in the Jackson public schools. During this time, hopefully, I will be able to tell you what we've achieved in middle school reform, share with you our goals for reform, and tell you about the support we've received during this effort, the problems we've encountered, and perhaps suggest to you how a national organization can help us.

The Community

Jackson has approximately 200,000 people. We have 58 schools serving a student population of 33,500. Thirty-eight of our schools are K–5 elementary schools; ten of the schools are grades 6–8 middle schools, and we have eight high schools. We are, perhaps, typical of many urban districts in that 80 percent of our student population is minority. A significant proportion of our enrollment has the types of problems characterized as contributing to lack of success in school. For example, 50 percent of our students live in one-parent households. Approximately 70 percent of our student population is on free and reduced meals, and nearly half of our middle school children are eligible for Chapter One services. On the Stanford Achievement Test, which is given to the sixth graders across the state, our sixth graders are performing at the 44th percentile as of 1991–92. This score is two percentile points lower than the state mean for Mississippi. A similar situation exists for seventh and eighth graders in Jackson—they perform two or more points below the state mean on the same test.

Middle School Reform

To look at what we've achieved in middle school reform, I'll relate to you

what's transpired during the last three school years. Prior to 1991–92, the organizational plan for our district was grades K–6 for elementary schools, grades 7–9 for junior high schools, and grades 10–12 for high schools. In August 1990, an advisory committee of central office and school level administrators, teachers, parents, classified employees, and business professionals began to study the middle school concept.

This committee was given the following expectations by the superintendent:

- Study the middle school concept, considering current research and practice.
- Look at the impact of a true middle school's structure upon building capacities in our schools. Notice we use the terminology, *true middle school structure*, because in our state, in 1985, with the advent of the kindergarten program funded by the state, many of our schools moved to a structure which appeared to be middle school, but the practice was that of junior high schools.
- Identify the cost associated with instituting the middle school concept.
- Recommend the timetable for implementation of the middle school concept.

This committee concluded that a change at the middle level not only meant change for the middle grades; it represented substantial change for the entire district, as it affected both elementary and high schools. It meant that throughout the district, there would be a reform effort, which at the very least, would be organizational in nature.

In December 1990, the school board approved the superintendent's recommendation that the district adopt a middle school concept, beginning with the 1991–92 school year. The district would have a K–5, 6–8, and 9–12 structure for each school. There were to be no pilots. Full implementation was to be achieved in only an eight-month period. In order to accomplish this rapid transition, an implementation plan was developed and put into effect. I won't share the entire plan with you, but I'd like to include, in summary form, some of the provisions in the plan:

- **Staff development for administrators and teachers**. At that time we thought of staff development as basically introductory, one of the building blocks of middle schools. Basically the staff development plan was for the purpose of implementing the structure.
- **Procedures for staffing schools at all levels**. In a district of 2,000 teachers and in a school system in a state where there are only two levels—elementary and secondary—at which teachers are certified in the subject areas, there is no middle school certification. It was necessary, then, for the district to undertake a massive transfer of teachers from the existing middle grades in elementary, junior high, and high schools keeping some who are already at the middle level.
- **Curriculum development activities**, including a plan to design middle school activities programs.

The key to enhancing student performance in our district will be professional development. Equipping teachers and administrators with knowledge and skill will make a difference.

Organizationally, we felt that we had accomplished the task of implementing the middle school concept. However, merely creating this structure did not insure that learning outcomes for children were positive. Our challenge, then, was no longer to reform structure, but to make our schools instructionally effective for our children.

- **A community education component** to inform and educate parents and community members about middle school.

The final component was the timetable for accomplishing these tasks in order that implementation could be achieved by August 1991. We took special care within our timetable to put into place those programs that characterize middle schools. For the first time, employees of the district attended a National Middle School Association convention in Long Beach, California, in November 1990. It was at that convention that staff members began to put together the implementation plan for middle schools. We paid particular attention to the recommendations for middle schools made by *Turning Points;* we tried to implement these as we made the transition from junior high to middle school.

If you visit our school district today, you would find the components of middle schools in place: teaming; block scheduling; advisor/advisee programs; intramurals; special interest groups and exploratory courses; and a core of basic courses. You would also find that we have obviously spent additional millions in implementing such programs. In recommending to our board the implementation of a middle school program, we did not anticipate the financial burden associated with that recommendation. Our first year implementation, which became a recurring cost, was at a cost of three million dollars. This was due to the institution of a reading program for students above the sixth grade, the introduction of additional exploratory courses, as well as the provision of two planning periods for teachers—one planning period for individual planning, and one planning period for team planning.

Organizationally, we felt that we had accomplished the task of implementing the middle school concept. However, merely creating this structure did not insure that learning outcomes for children were positive. Our challenge, then, was no longer to reform structure, but to make our schools instructionally effective for our children.

A Vision of Middle-Grades Education

In April 1992, the district began the development of a proposal to be submitted to the Clark Foundation's Program for Disadvantaged Youth for funding to assist us in our reform efforts. Subsequently, we received a planning grant from the foundation, for the purpose of developing a vision, strategy, plan, and timetable for our reform. Because of this support, we're involved in a contract with AED to provide technical assistance for the district as we focus on improving achievement for our children. I can report to you today that we do have a vision for reform and this vision extends more than organizationally. This vision focuses upon students' achievement. Based on this vision, we have focused on enhanced performance for all of our students as a goal. More specifically, between grades 5–9, our goal is that:

- Middle school children will complete the middle grades curriculum on time.
- They will exhibit mastery of higher-order reasoning, thinking, and comprehension skills.
- They will demonstrate an understand-

ing of basic health issues and strategies for a lifetime of physical fitness.

- They will demonstrate an improved understanding and acceptance of values held by society.

- They will be knowledgeable about available future opportunities and understand how different curricular choices can affect their future options.

We've given a lot of thought to establishing measurable outcomes by which to assess our progress. These outcomes will be student-related, school-related, and district-related. The key to enhancing student performance in our district will be professional development. Equipping teachers and administrators with knowledge and skill will make a difference.

Barriers We Face

What are some of the problems we face? District initiatives can cause difficulty in maintaining focus on reform efforts. In our district, we are engaged in several major efforts at the same time. State, local, and regional accreditation guidelines sometimes pose a problem. For example, schools in the Jackson area and throughout Mississippi are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. A new process utilized by that accrediting agency is school renewal. School renewal calls for a five-year plan. At the same time, our district has had a history of developing a five-year plan, requiring each individual school to do a annual school improvement plan. When you lay a reform effort alongside the school renewal effort, alongside a five-year planning process, unless you're very careful, it will appear as another program, another thing to do for the teachers and principals of the individual schools.

Challenge to National Organizations

What we suggest to you as national organizations about what you can do to help us in local school districts is as follows: There's a need to identify models of middle school reform that focus on student achievement, rather than upon achieving a certain structure. Not enough emphasis is placed upon making the true middle school instructionally effective. You can focus on identifying professional training which has been shown to be effective in helping teachers to enhance student performance. Then third, you can create forums for sharing information about reform and about training necessary for reform through regional and national conferences and through organizational publications.

There's a need to identify models of middle school reform that focus on student achievement, rather than upon achieving a certain structure. Not enough emphasis is placed upon making the true middle school instructionally effective.

CLAY MIDDLE SCHOOL

School Population

1992-93	Total	725
American Indian		0.3%
Afro-American		34.1%
Asian-American		3.3%
Hispanic-American		5.0%
Euro-American		57.4%

(Special Education 8.8%)

Programs

Advisor-Advisee	90-93
Community of Caring	90-93
Teachers Under Cover	91-92
Success '91	90-93
Parents Sharing Books	92-93
Bilingual Education	

Interdisciplinary Teaching

Make It Happen 92-93 (New Team)
Cross curricular connections--occasional use varies by teams

MGIP Network Grant

Special Ed/Regular Ed Inclusion 93

DICKINSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

School Population

1992-93	Total	696
American Indian		1.0%
Afro-American		38.1%
Asian-American		0.3%
Hispanic-American		1.1%
Euro-American		59.5%

(Special Education 8.7%)

Programs

Advisor-Advisee	90-93
Alpha Math	90-93
Teachers Under Cover	91-92
Literacy Assessment	91-92
Chapter I Services	92-93
Community of Caring	

Interdisciplinary Teaching

Literacy Awareness & Development
SOAR reading, language arts + public & school libraries
Holiday Express--reading, language arts, math & science
Make It Happen 91-92 (Freedom), 92-93 (New Team)

MGIP X Grant

Weather Station 92-93

Department of Education Grant

REAP Reading Excitement and Paperbacks 93-95

Middle Grades Reading Network Grant

Literacy Follow-up 92-94

"The Good Stuff's In The Middle"

EDISON MIDDLE SCHOOL

School Population

1992-93	Total	605
American Indian		0.0%
Afro-American		26.0%
Asian-American		2.1%
Hispanic-American		2.6%
Euro-American		69.3%

(Special Education 10.9%)

Programs

Advisor-Advisee	89-93
Positive Self Talk	90-91
Teachers Under Cover	91-92
Valuing Diversity	92-93
Community of Caring	

Interdisciplinary Teaching

The Arts & Oriental Culture 91-92
Make It Happen 91-92 (Our Heritage), 92-93 (New Team)
Each school team minimum 1 Interdisciplinary unit 93
Cross curricular connections--occasional use/varies by team

MGIP X Grant

The Arts & Oriental Culture 91-92

Middle Grades Improvement Program

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JACKSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

School Population

1992-93	Total	812
American Indian		0.2%
Afro-American		24.3%
Asian-American		0.7%
Hispanic-American		5.2%
Euro-American		69.6%
(Special Education 5.2%)		

Programs

Advisor-Advisee	90-93
Teachers Under Cover	90-92
Society's Kids (mentoring/partnership)	91-93
Breakfast of Readers (students/adults reading)	93
Valuing Diversity	92-93
Bilingual Services/tutorial	
Community of Caring	

Interdisciplinary Teaching

Make It Happen (Pollution Solution)	91-93
New Team (93)	

Cross curricular connections--varies by teams
Interdisciplinary Instruction--occasional basis

Grants

None

Compiled by: Mary Pat Hatcher-Disler
Curriculum Supervisor

NAVARRE MIDDLE SCHOOL

School Population

1992-93	Total	518
American Indian		0.0%
Afro-American		32.6%
Asian-American		0.8%
Hispanic-American		12.7%
Euro-American		53.9%
(Special Education 2.3%)		

Programs

Rising Star	88-93
Advisor-Advisee	89-93
Community of Caring	90-93
Hooked on Books	90-93
Books 'R Us (Student-Run Bookshop)	90-93
Teachers Under Cover	90-92
Parents Sharing Books	92-93
Chapter 1 Services	91-93
Bilingual Education	
Community of Readers	93-96

Interdisciplinary Instruction

Arts as a Reflection of Our World--SS & Fine Arts
Voyage of the Mimi--Science, SS, Computer/Tech
Earth Day
Make It Happen 91-92 (Our Heritage), 92-93 (2nd Team)
Holiday Express--SS, reading, lang. arts, science
Cross curricular connections--regularly
Interdisciplinary units regular use

MGIP X Grants

Pilot "At Risk" Team	87-88
Reading/Writing 90-92 (thematic units)	
Hooked on Books	90-92

Arts as A Reflection of Our World 91-92 (SS & Fine Arts)
X-Press 92-93 (Telecommunications & SS, Science)
Outdoor Classroom 92-93 (Technology & Science)

Department of Education Grant

REAP Reading Excitement and Paperbacks	93-95

Middle Grades Reading Network Grant

Community of Readers	93-95

SOUTH BEND COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
Division of Instruction and Curriculum
635 S. Main St.
South Bend, Indiana 46601

"The Good Stuff's In the Middle"

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

- 5 schools with same core curriculum
- Program of studies fully complies with the course requirements established by the Indiana Department of Education
- Elective courses available for exploration
- Interdisciplinary teams for basic skills
- Modified block scheduling at some schools
- Required courses in Grades 7 and 8

Language Arts	Reading*/Foreign Language
Mathematics	Science
Social Studies	Practical Arts
Fine Arts	(Home Ec & Indistrial Tech)
Health	Physical Education

- Pre-algebra and algebra opportunities
- Special Education programs and services
- Chapter 1 tutorial/services for qualifying schools
- Scheduled Parent Conferences twice per year
- Middle Grades Improvement Program initiative Lilly Endowment
- Community of Caring
- Advisor-Advisee program
- Athletic/Extracurricular activities
- Exploratory Wheel--Grade 7 only: Home Ec/Indus. Tech/Spanish/French

- Reading required for all in grade 7; grade 8 choice of reading or Foreign Language.

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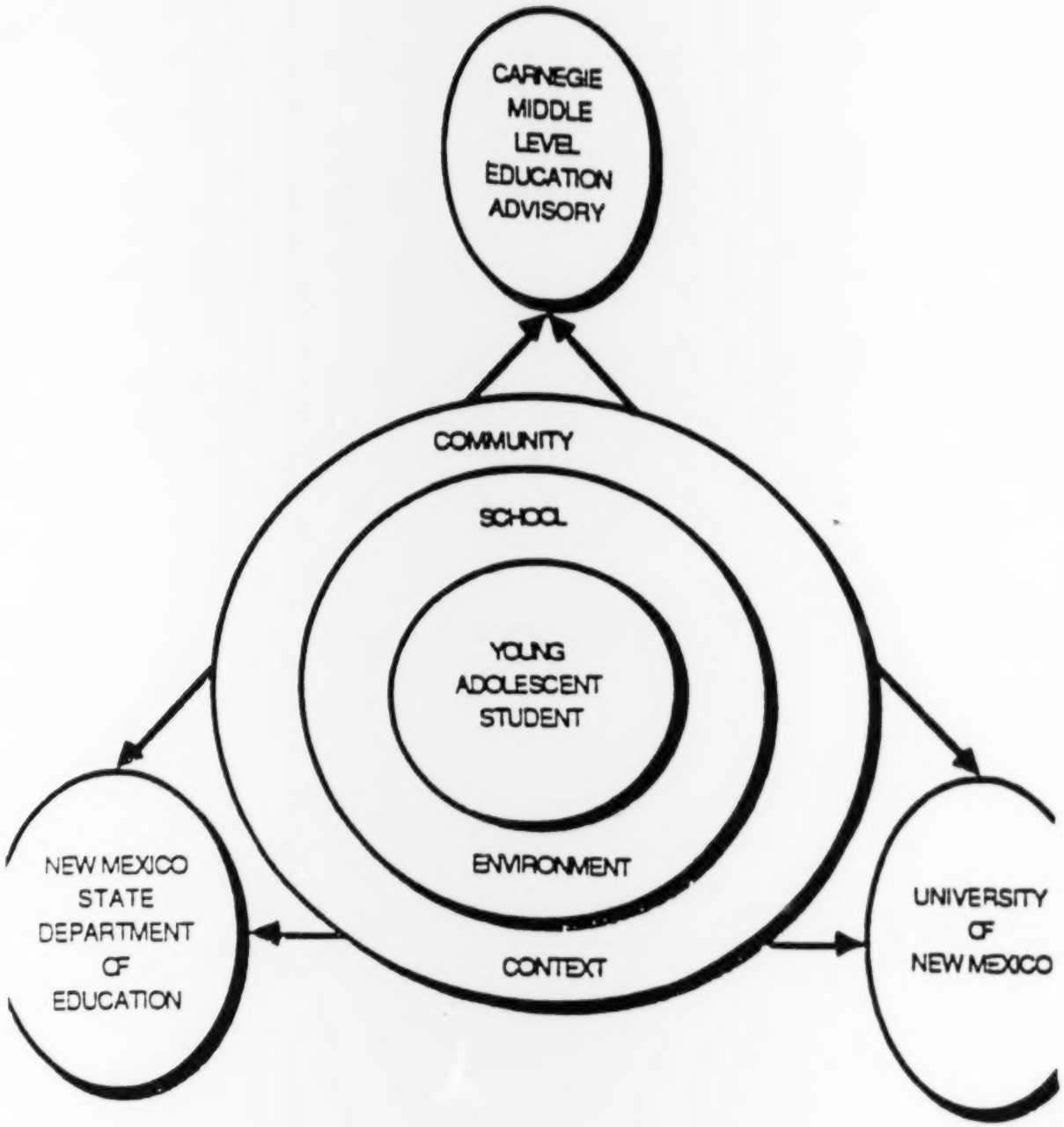
CARNEGIE
MIDDLE
LEVEL
EDUCATION
ADVISORY
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL
YOUNG
ADOLESCENT
STUDENT
ENVIRONMENT
CONTEXT
NEW MEXICO
STATE
DEPARTMENT
OF
EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY
OF
NEW MEXICO

SUMMARY OF SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The objectives of the small group discussions held throughout the seminars were to:

- Identify issues that remain in achieving systemic middle-grades reform;
- Ground the discussion of middle-grades reform issues in the experience of actual systemwide reform efforts at the district and state levels;
- Approach consensus on a working definition of systemic middle-grades reform; and
- Have participants agree to undertake initiatives, both collaborative and individual, to foster this kind of reform.

To discuss these issues, participants were divided into several working groups, each of which contained representatives from a variety of settings—professional organizations, foundations, and intermediary organizations. For each of the goals, participants were assigned different tasks.

To **identify remaining issues in systemic middle grades reform**, participants described a middle-grades initiative with which their organization was involved and presented the issues that were resolved by their initiative, and those that remained unresolved. Many issues surfaced in this discussion, from national standards to time for planning at the school building level. Participants agreed that the issues in middle-grades reform, did, indeed, cut across all levels of the educational system.

The graphic (on p. 36) was designed to explain the interactions among the various levels. The major levels of the system include the federal government, the state, communities, families, districts, and schools. The major types of organizations that intervene in the system include national professional organizations, intermediary organizations, education schools and colleges, and foundations. Participants agreed that changes needed to be made at all levels if systemic middle-grades reform that focused on high outcomes for all students was to succeed.

To **ground the discussion of systemic middle-grades reform** in the reality of actual district initiatives, participants considered the situations presented by Mary Pat Hatcher-Disler, Reuben Dilworth, and Richard LaPan, and proposed ways in which their organizations, either alone or in collaboration with one another, might be able to assist these reform efforts through interventions at all levels of the system.

As a result of these discussions, the following possible collaborations were suggested as ways in which national associations might support systemic middle-grades reform efforts:

- Setting up a mechanism for meeting together at a national conference held by one of the organizations;
- Working to set up a clearinghouse as a means for sharing information on organizations providing support for middle-grades reform that would include informal "counseling" on appropriate services;
- Working together on advocacy and lobbying;
- Developing ways of getting new people as providers of technical assis-

tance and resources that address the issues involved in achieving high outcomes for all students and not just changes in school structures; and

- Bringing organizations involved in middle-grades reform and those involved in school restructuring together to talk about parallel issues.

In order to derive **a working definition of middle-grades reform**, the group participated in a consensus building exercise. Although consensus was not reached on the exact language of a definition, there was agreement on the central elements necessary for middle- grades reform and the support needed to maintain them. These elements are **high outcomes for all students** that are sustained by establishing **high expectations, a supportive school climate and structures, rigorous curricula, and effective instruction** that is grounded in students' developmental needs. Support should also occur through coherent policies and practices at all levels of the educational system, comprehensive staff development, and a well-conceived system of accountability. Federal, state and local governments, families, and communities must all share in efforts to reform our current system and work toward achieving these goals. It was also agreed that the language of the mission will be further refined at later meetings of the group.

Considerable agreement was reached on the next steps the participants wanted to take in order to support systemic middle-grades reform. First, they agreed to meet at the **National Middle Schools Association conference in Portland, Oregon on November 5, 1993**. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss further the creation of a clearinghouse that would provide information about technical assistance, research, and events related to systemic middle-grades reform. The second meeting of the group is scheduled at the **National Association of Secondary School Principals' "Long Conference,"** held in **Washington, D.C., March 17-19, 1994**. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the coordination of lobbying and advocacy efforts on behalf of middle-grades reform and to begin a dialogue with the school restructuring movement. In addition, if it seems appropriate, a third meeting will be scheduled at the May meeting of the National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools and Teaching (NCREST) to continue the dialogue with the restructuring movement.

Conclusion

The Clark Foundation/Academy for Educational Development Middle Grades Reform seminars set out to increase the awareness of the need for systemic middle-grades reform among national associations, and to initiate collaborative efforts among the associations and other national organizations to help initiate and sustain these efforts. In fact, this was accomplished. Participating groups agreed to meet again to continue to discuss issues and initiatives in middle-grades reform.

As shown by their active participation in the seminars, the national associations that were involved view meeting as a way to coordinate, if not collaborate on, their efforts. The clearinghouse under discussion will provide an invaluable service to practitioners at the district and state levels who want to choose the best resources in middle-grades reform to help them with their particular situation. The

coordination of lobbying and advocacy efforts will support systemic reform at a different level, that of federal policy. And the attempt at coordinating middle-grades reform efforts with those of the school restructuring movement will lead to greater articulation of educational reform at all levels, K–12. Clearly, this group has the potential to influence middle-grades reform so that it does, in fact, support high outcomes for all students at all levels of the educational system.

NEXT TWO MEETINGS!

November 5, 1993 at **National Middle Schools Association conference** in **Portland, Oregon**. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss further the creation of a clearinghouse that would provide information about technical assistance, research, and events.

The second meeting of the group is scheduled at the **National Association of Secondary School Principals' "Long Conference,"** in **Washington, D.C., March 17-19, 1994**. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the coordination of lobbying and advocacy efforts on behalf of middle-grades reform, and to begin a dialogue with the school restructuring movement.

MIDDLE-GRADES EDUCATION IN AN ERA OF REFORM
BEYOND EQUAL ACCESS TO HIGH OUTCOMES FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

- Ecology of students' lives
- Political will
- Vision
  - Long-range
  - Short-term
- Policy
- Structures for reform
  - Decision making
  - Governance
  - Top-down and bottom-up strategies
- Assessment and accountability
  - Outcomes
  - Standards
- Leadership
- Equity and diversity
- Curriculum
- Teachers
  - Professional development
  - Expanded roles

THE PARTS OF THE SYSTEM

- School
- District
- Commmunity
- Families
- State

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Professional Organizations
- Professional development
- Publications

Education Schools and Colleges
- Teacher preparation
- Research
- Professional development

Intermediary Organizations
- Technical assistance
- Evaluation and research
- Program development

Foundations
- Leadership/vision
- Resources
- Support

PARTICIPANTS
MIDDLE GRADES EDUCATIONAL REFORM SEMINARS
SPRING 1993

Dr. Gwendolyn Cooke
Director of Urban Services
National Association of Secondary School Principals
1904 Association Drive
Reston, Virginia 22091-1537
703-860-0200

Dr. Reuben Dilworth
Superintendent
Columbus Municipal School District
P.O. Box 1308
Columbus, Mississippi 39703-1308
601-328-2598

Ms. Donna V. Dunlop
Consultant (formerly Program Director)
DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund
261 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10016
212-953-1269

Dr. Joyce Epstein
Co-Director
Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning
Johns Hopkins University
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21218
410-516-0370

Dr. Maria Garza-Lubeck
Director
Middle-Grades School State Policy Initiative
Council of Chief State School Officers
One Massachusetts Avenue N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20001-1431
202-336-7029

Ms. Akiyu Hatano
Program Associate
Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
250 Park Avenue, Room 900
New York, New York 10177-0026
212-986-7050

Ms. Holly Hatch
Director
Urban Youth Initiative
Center for Early Adolescence
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Suite 211—Carr Mill Mall
Carrboro, NC 27510
919-966-1148

Ms. Mary Pat Hatcher-Disler
Curriculum Supervisor
South Bend Community School Corporation
Division of Instruction and Curriculum
635 South Main Street
South Bend, Indiana 46601

Dr. Madeleine F. Holzer
Consultant
School and Community Services
Academy for Educational Development
100 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10011
212-243-1110

Dr. Anthony W. Jackson
Program Officer
Carnegie Corporation of New York
437 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022
212-371-3200

Dr. Laurel Kanthak
Associate Executive Director and
Director of Middle Level Education
National Association of Secondary School Principals
1904 Association Drive
Reston, Virginia 22091-1537
703-860-0200

Ms. Marcia Klenbort
Director, Education Programs
Southern Regional Council
134 Peachtree Street, N.W., Suite 1900
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-1864
404-522-8764

Mr. Richard E. LaPan
State Project Director
Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative
New Mexico Department of Education
State Education Building
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501-2786
505-827-6625

Dr. Joan Lipsitz
Program Director, Education
Lilly Endowment, Inc.
2801 North Meridian Street
P.O. Box 88068
Indianapolis, Indiana 46208-0068
317-924-5471

Mr. M. Hayes Mizell
Director
Program for Disadvantaged Youth
Edna McConnell Clark Foundation
250 Park Avenue, Room 900
New York, New York 10177-0026
212-986-7050

Mr. Patrick Montesano
Executive Director
School and Community Services
Academy for Educational Development
100 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10011
212-243-1110

Dr. Jayne Osgood
Program Manager of Annual Conference
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
1250 North Pitt Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-1453
703-549-9110

Dr. Deborah Reeve
Associate Executive Director
National Association of Elementary School Principals
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
703-684-3345

Mr. William J. Saunders
Executive Director Emeritus
National Alliance of Black School Educators
2816 Georgia Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001
202-483-1549

Mr. Dennis Sparks
Executive Director
National Staff Development Council
517 North York
Dearborn, Michigan 48128
313-277-3246

Dr. Rafael Valdivieso
Vice President
School and Community Services
Academy for Educational Development
1255 23rd Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037
202-862-1900

Dr. Boyce Williams
Director for Institutional Relations
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
2010 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-466-7496

Mr. Ron Williamson
Executive Director for Instruction
Ann Arbor Public Schools
Instructional Services
2725 Broadwalk
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
313-994-2244
formerly, Executive Director
National Middle School Association

Dr. Arthur Wise
President
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
2010 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20036

AED's MIDDLE-GRADES EDUCATIONAL REFORM PROGRAM

Since 1985, the Academy for Educational Development (AED) has focused its experience and expertise in educational reform and restructuring, teacher development, school-based management and school-family-community collaboration on the education of young adolescents. AED's projects include direct interventions with middle-grades schools and their school districts; technical assistance for improvements in school organization, management and governance; development of curricula and instructional strategies; and program evaluation. Activities of the Middle-Grades Educational Reform Program have included the following:

Urban Middle Grades Partnership. In 1991, AED established the Urban Middle Grades Partnership (UMGP) for districts and schools that are undertaking middle-grades educational reform. The UMGP was developed by AED and the **Southern Regional Council**, with the support of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, through its Program for Disadvantaged Youth. The project provides technical assistance and incentives for teams of teachers that are providing challenging curricular and instructional programs to students who have been low-achievers, and supports efforts to create systemic change in middle-grades education. Participating districts include Buffalo, New Orleans, San Antonio, Tucson and Wichita.

Middle-Grades Educational Reform Seminars. Developed with the support of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, through its Program for Disadvantaged Youth, AED is convening senior staff of national educational organizations to address the need for systemic reform in middle-grades education and coordinate efforts to support such reform. Participating organizations include intermediary organizations that provide technical assistance, research and evaluation agencies, philanthropic foundations, and associations whose members work in or with middle-grades schools.

Middle-Grades Initiative—Jackson, Mississippi Public Schools. AED is providing technical assistance and support for this district's extensive efforts to reform middle-grades education. AED's services include designing and organizing a set of professional development activities for teachers and administrators in Jackson's ten middle schools, and assisting the district in developing a long-range plan for middle-grades reform.

Middle School for Pregnant and Parenting Teens. AED is facilitating the design and implementation of a middle-grades school that will combine a rich academic program and support services necessary for students' successful transition to high school. In addition, AED will document the planning phase and first-year operations. This work is undertaken through AED's Support Center for Educational Equity for Young Mothers, with the support of the Aaron Diamond Foundation, and with the guidance of an advisory committee of educators, advocates and policy makers.

Urban Schools Science and Mathematics Program. In 1987, with the support of the Ford Motor Company, AED created this middle-grades educational initiative to improve science and mathematics curricula and increase the participation and performance of minority and female students in middle-grades science and mathematics. In Atlanta, Cleveland and Detroit, AED provided technical assistance to schools to develop and implement improved course offerings in science and mathematics, staff development for science and mathematics teachers, and improvements in student support systems.

Urban Middle Schools Adolescent Pregnant Prevention Project. AED designed and implemented this initiative in 1985, with the support of the Carnegie Corporation and the Ford Foundation, to assist school systems and community agencies in eight cities across the country to develop collaborative projects that link pregnancy prevention with efforts to improve the health, academic and decision-making skills of adolescents. Local projects ware conducted by Kansas City, Oakland, Detroit, Atlanta, Norfolk, Boston, Milwaukee and Los Angeles.

Lilly Endowment's Middle-Grades School Recognition Project. From 1986 to 1988, AED designed and administered this initiative, which recognized the improvement efforts of 30 middle-grades schools in Indiana through incentive awards and provided larger grants to 15 of those schools to implement comprehensive school improvement strategies. AED provided technical assistance to teachers and administrators throughout the planning and implementation stages, and conducted annual professional development conferences for participants.

Middle-Grades School Restructuring Project—Center for Population and Family Health. From 1989 to 1991, Columbia University's School of Public Health expanded its role in school-based clinics located in four New York City middle-grades schools by supporting educational restructuring efforts. AED provided technical assistance and support to one of the large middle schools engaged in a comprehensive restructuring effort, and worked with teachers, administrators, and clinic staff to develop a program to promote a better match among the school's organization, its curriculum and the developmental characteristics of young adolescents.

Middle-Grades School Restructuring Project—New York City Community School District One. Also during 1989 to 1991, AED worked with this district's task force for middle school reform and provided technical assistance and support in planning and implementing professional development activities for middle-school teachers and administrators. These included workshops and discussion groups focused on improving learning and instruction, and on organizing schools to meet the developmental needs of young adolescents.

New York City Chancellor's Corridor Initiative. AED provided technical assistance to the Fund for New York City Public Education in developing and implementing this program designed to restructure elementary and middle-grades education through school-based management, instructional improvement, parent participation and community partnerships. AED's technical assistance to four participating school clusters (middle schools and

their "feeder" elementary schools) included workshops, conferences, a resource directory, and on-site consultation. In addition, AED planned and conducted a citywide conference to disseminate information to teachers, administrators, policy makers and parents about the progress and outcomes of the Corridor Initiative.

Evaluation of the National Committee for Citizens in Education's (NCCE) School-based Improvement Project. From 1986 to 1989 AED conducted an evaluation of the NCCE training model in building school-based planning teams in elementary and middle schools. The evaluation addressed the link between school-based management and instructional reform and provided NCCE and participating schools and districts with information to assist in refining and strengthening their efforts.

For more information about AED's middle-grades educational reform programs, write or phone:

Patrick Montesano
Executive Director, School and
Community Services
Academy for Educational Development
100 Fifth Avenue
New York New York 10011
Phone: (212) 243-1110
Fax: (212) 627- 0407

Copies of these proceedings are available for $5.00 (prepaid) including postage and handling from Publications, Academy for Educational Development, 1255 23rd Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037, (202) 862-1900.

Also Available on the Middle Grades from AED

Building Life Options: School-Community Collaborations for Pregnancy Prevention in the Middle Grades, 1991, a handbook for family life educators based on the five-year Urban Schools Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program. $19.95

New Directions in Parent Involvement, 1992, a report on the findings of a two-year study of effective parental involvement programs examining the role of parental involvement in improving student achievement, restructuring schools, and reforming public education. $12.50

New Equations: The Urban Schools Science and Mathematics Program, 1993, a report summarizing the state of middle-grades mathematics and science education based on the three-year Urban Schools Science and Mathematics Program. $12.95

Publications available (prepaid only) from Don Kelley, Academy for Educational Development, 1255 23rd St. N.W. Washington, DC 20037. Make checks payable to the Academy for Educational Development. Prices include postage and handling.

Copies of the Clark Foundation directory, **Who's Behind Middle Grades Reform? A Directory of National Organizations** is available from the Program for Disadvantaged Youth, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, 250 Park Avenue, Room 900, New York, New York 10177-0026. One free copy will be sent upon request. Please enclose eight 29¢ stamps with your request. The directory may be photocopied and distributed to interested individuals and organizations.

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ACADEMY FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, INC.
1255 TWENTY-THIRD STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20037
TELEPHONE: (202) 862-1900 FAX: (202)862-1947

NEW YORK OFFICE
ACADEMY FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, INC.
100 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10011
TELEPHONE: (212) 243-1110 FAX: (212) 627-0407

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